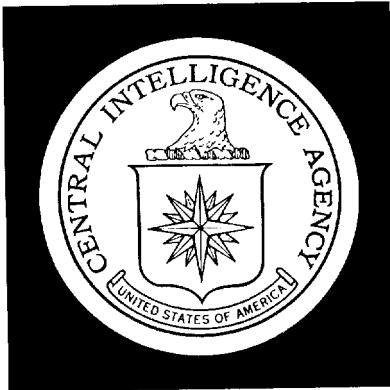


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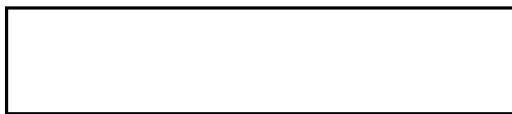
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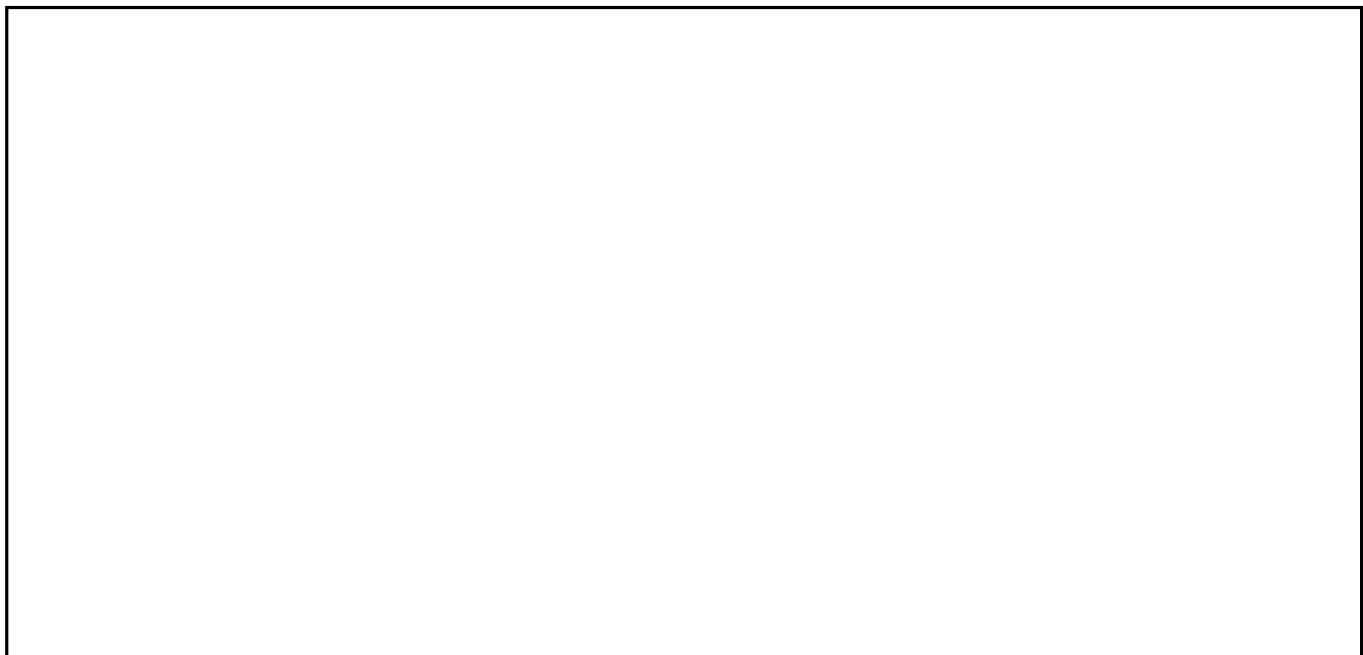
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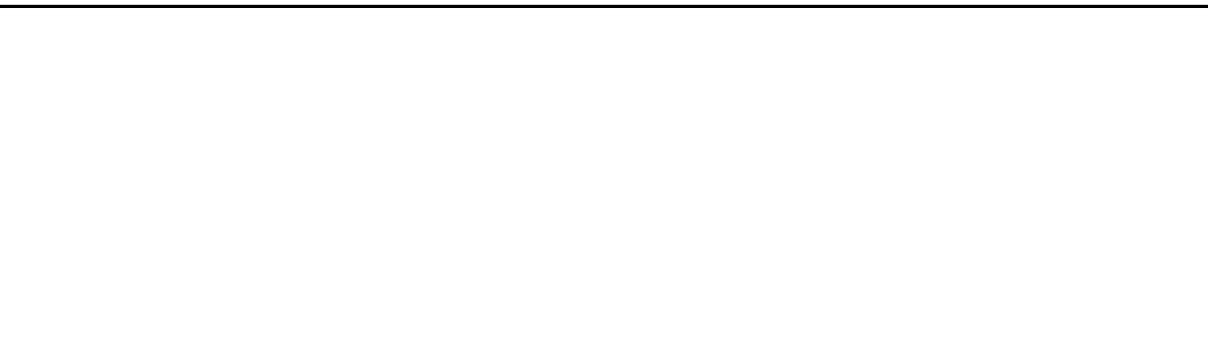
Muscat and Oman: The new sultan has gained popular acceptance. (Page 9)

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Muscat and Oman: The new sultan has gained immediate popular acceptance, but he still faces problems with a rebel movement.

Sultan Qabus was greeted by a tumultuous welcome on 30 July when he made his first visit to the capital city of Muscat, which had been extremely hostile to the old sultan. Qabus has also moved to mend his domestic fences by appointing his exiled uncle, Tariq, as prime minister. Tariq had spent the last several years in neighboring Dubai, where he had been plotting a coup of his own against the old sultan. In addition to binding the royal family closer, Qabus probably hopes that Tariq's appointment will convince other rebels to become loyal supporters of the new regime.

The main opposition is a rebel group that operates under an umbrella organization called the National Democratic Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. Although it started as a guerrilla movement in the province of Dhufar, it now includes rebels from other parts of Muscat and Oman as well. The organization is believed to get most of its support from Iraq. Because Baghdad apparently regards the new regime as an "imperialistic" continuation of the old, it may well try to encourage continued resistance to the new sultan.

Qabus has moved to reconcile the rebels by granting them an amnesty and freeing many from prison. His offer to treat them with "kindness and understanding" is in strong contrast to the former sultan's habit of tying them to cannon barrels heated in the desert sun. Nevertheless, the success of the new government in the immediate future depends heavily on the continued support of the UK through the British-officered Muscat Army.

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Libya: The two US-owned oil companies negotiating with the government over the price of crude oil have been given until 11 August to make their final offers to the official negotiating committee. The government probably wishes to complete negotiations before the anniversary of the coup on 1 September. Failure to reach an agreement within the deadline will probably result in the unilateral imposition of a price by the government.

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